

THE MAYOR'S REPORT



Governor Larry Hogan on February 1st during the reception he and First Lady Yumi Hogan hosted for the Maryland Mayors Conference.



2018 graduates of the 9th Annual Senior Citizens Honors Graduation



Seniors from Emerson House and Parkview Senior Apartments during the Town of Bladensburg's Black History Month Program.



Guest Author & Keynote Speaker, Lexi P., Imani James and Courtney Lancaster (Bladensburg Community Center) during the Town's Black History Month Program

February 2018

Mayor Takisha James February Report

Legislative Updates

1. **Municipal Highway User Revenues:** Municipal officials and staff members from all over the State traveled to Annapolis on February 22nd to show their support of MML's priority legislation to permanently and fully restore municipal Highway User Revenues. The MML panel testifying in strong support of HB 807, introduced by Delegates Pam Beidle and Carl Anderton, was anchored by MML President and New Market Councilmember Jake Romanell. He was joined by MML President-Elect and Rockville Mayor Bridget Donnell Newton, Salisbury Mayor Jake Day, Salisbury Council President Jack Heath, Capitol Heights Councilmember Elaine Williams, and MML staff member Candace Donoho. The House Environment and Transportation Committee Chair, Kumar Barve acknowledged the roomful of municipal officials, who were asked to stand to demonstrate to the members of the Committee how strongly they supported the legislation.

The bill now goes to the House Motor Vehicle and Transportation Subcommittee for consideration.

2. **SB 1188 / Wireless Facilities - Permitting and Siting:** Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Middleton, introduced a bill that would significantly impair the ability of municipalities to regulate the siting of small cellular antennas and related infrastructure.

The version of the bill as introduced is very similar in nature to the draft that was presented to MML and other stakeholders by the wireless industry before the beginning of the General Assembly session. The bill, opposed by MML, would preempt local authority regarding height of poles, size of equipment, amount of fees, and other critical factors that would affect quality of life issues in municipalities. I've obtained language from other town's that have already passed ordinances so the council and staff can work together to create an appropriate ordinance for the town of Bladensburg.

Meetings & Events

1. **February 1-2 | Maryland Mayors Conference:**

MML lined up a strong lineup of speakers for this year's winter conference. We heard from Senator Doug Peters (District 23, Prince George's County & Budget & Tax Committee Member), Delegate Michael E. Busch (Speaker of the House of Delegates), Secretary Mark Belton (Department of Natural Resources), and Secretary Kenneth Holt (Department of Housing). Following the remarks by each speaker we were able to have question and answer sessions. I'll follow up with staff regarding ideas that were shared in an effort to apply what we can implement in the Town of Bladensburg moving forward. A grants presentation was also conducted where a grants consultant walked us through the "do's and don'ts" of applying for grants. We also had the opportunity to sit in on committee hearings as well as attend floor sessions of the House of Delegates and Senate.

2. **February 7 & 21 | Port Towns MML Booth Meeting:**

The Port Towns met to discuss the plan for having a booth at the MML Summer Conference. Specifically we discussed the purpose of having the booth and the need to have a clear message to communicate to attendees in advance and during the show. Our theme for this year will be "Collaboration at its Finest" and we'll highlight examples of the partnerships that have taken place amongst the Port Towns and how they've benefitted our community. We have already started working on next steps to plan and implement a successful booth presence in the exhibit hall. In addition, we'll use this opportunity to promote Port Town's Day, which is yet another wonderful example of the collaboration of our towns.

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4. February 23 | Town of Bladensburg Annual Black History Month Program

The theme for this year's program was "Celebrating African American Literature". The featured speaker was Lexi P. a 12 year-old local author and resident of Prince George's County. She brought along copies of her two books, "Curly Girls Love Your Curls" and "The Ice Cream Talk: Loving the Skin Your In" and provided autographed copies to members of the audience. The event also shined a spotlight on residents and members of the community who read or recited passages from their favorite African-American authors. We were treated to readings from Dr. Barbara Bottoms (Rogers Heights Elementary School), Malcolm Augustine (Democratic Central Committee), Officer Cedrick Tanksley (Bladensburg Police Department), Imani James (First Daughter of Bladensburg), Ms. Ruby White (who wrote an original piece), Merxis Perdomo (Bladensburg High School), Courtney Lancaster (Bladensburg Community Center) and Ms. Debra Capponi (Bladensburg Branch Library).

Thank you to everyone who came out for this event and to the staff who worked so hard to plan and implement the program!

5. February 19 | States Attorney Angela Alsobrooks hosted a meeting for Prince George's County Mayors:

Ms. Alsobrooks is a candidate for Prince George's County Executive, so she invited mayors from all over the county to meet her and have a dialogue about our respective communities. We were able to ask her questions about her vision for the county as well as for support for our respective communities and future projects. Concerns that were raised ranged from improving the educational system, transportation and infrastructure improvements as well as support for redevelopment projects, specifically for inner beltway communities. We also shared experiences regarding what has & hasn't worked well in the past and offered suggestions for improving support and communication between municipalities and the County Executive's office.

6. February 19 | Parkview Senior Apartments Black History Month Program:

The seniors of Parkview organized a wonderful program "Moving Forward in Spite of Challenges". This program featured dramatic readings by the seniors along with musical tributes. The program was very inspiring and moving, particularly with the special tribute that was done for me, given the historical significance of my recent election. I was immensely humbled and surprised to be honored! Thank you so much Parkview Residents!

7. February 24 | End Time Harvest Ministries Meeting with the new Bladensburg High School Enrollees:

I was pleased to be invited to the February meeting where I was able to meet the 9th grade enrollees for the Career Success Wellness Ambassadors program. Many of our state and county elected officials were also present along with Former Mayor of Bladensburg, Walter L. James, Jr. Congratulations to Reverend Addison on her new class of Wellness Ambassadors!

8. February 24 | 9th Annual Senior Citizens Honors Graduation & Prom Ceremony

Ms. Barbara Givens did an extraordinary job of organizing this year's graduation & prom ceremony for the 9th year! Her non-profit organization has assisted domestic violence victims in transitioning to **victors** as well as offered support for veterans and seniors seeking to get their GEDs. Our Legislative District 47 Delegation was present and also gave remarks of greetings and support to the graduates.

9. February 24 | The 95th Annual Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department Banquet:

I attended the annual banquet on behalf of the town and gave remarks. My comments focused on expressing gratitude for the continued hard work and dedication of the volunteer fire fighters along with their families who support them with their often stressful duties.

10. February 26 | Port Towns Quarterly Meeting:

The meeting was hosted by Bladensburg and discussion included an update on MML priorities, Ernest Maier batching plant expansion, and General Assembly bills impacting municipalities. A good amount of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion surrounding Ernest Maier's expansion. This was fruitful because it allowed elected officials and staff to have their questions addressed by

Brendan Quin, the President of the company. Key points from the presentation were that it would allow an opportunity to provide more jobs to local residents, reduce dust, eliminate runoff, recycle waste water, and harvest storm water.

11. February 28 | Held Quarterly Bladensburg Business Meeting

Officer Brown and I met with the businesses to share updates on the Town as well as answer questions or address concerns from the Business Community. One of the “asks” from me was to support my efforts with raising resources for our Volunteer Fire Department. Many were quick to offer their professional services and or assistance with fundraiser, so I’ll be following up on this effort moving forward.

12. February 28 | Participated in the Bladensburg High School Black History Month Program

I had the privilege of being the Keynote Speaker for this year’s program. I was asked to read the poem “I, Too” by Langston Hughes and then give remarks. The highlight from my perspective was witnessing the creativity and talent of our students throughout the program. They demonstrated what I’ve come to know about them over the years; they are brilliant and talented students achieving great things and their futures are bright!

13. Maryland Black Mayors Meeting

The featured speakers were Everton Morris, Assistant Executive Director of AAMA (African American Mayors Association) and Ms. Angela Alsobrooks (Prince George’s County States Attorney & candidate for Prince George’s County Executive). We also discussed recent efforts to support legislation coming up in Annapolis and debriefed on HUR efforts up to that point

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- Eggstravaganza
 - March 31, 2018 12:00 – 3:00 PM at the David C. Harrington Community Park
- Next Mayor and Council Meeting – Monday April 9, 2018
 - Work Session at 5:30PM / Televised Council Meeting at 7:00PM at Town Hall